

7. Consultation and Scoping

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This chapter sets out the following closely linked elements of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process:

- *Consultation* with statutory consultees, other relevant bodies/organisations, stakeholders and members of the public; and
- *Scoping* to determine the appropriate assessment approach and technical content of the EIAR.

7.1.2 Further information on Transport Scotland's public engagement activities for the A9 Dualling programme, including the proposed scheme (Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing), can be found online at [the A9 Dualling website](#) (Transport Scotland, 2025).

Consultation

7.1.3 Consultation for the proposed scheme has been undertaken in line with Transport Scotland's guide: '[A9 Dualling Programme Engaging with Communities](#)' (Transport Scotland, 2013 and 2016 update), and guidance provided in [Revision 1 of Planning Advice Note \(PAN\) 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment](#) (Scottish Government, 2017).

7.1.4 Consultation has provided an iterative and on-going input to the progression of the proposed scheme throughout the EIA and design process. This chapter summarises the consultation undertaken, the key issues raised and how these have been taken into account. Appendix A7.1 (Summary of Scoping and Consultation Responses) provides a summary of the consultation responses.

7.1.5 Consultation activities undertaken since April 2016 are discussed in terms of both the [Design Manual for Roads and Bridges \(DMRB\) Stage 2 Scheme Assessment Report](#) (Transport Scotland, 2024) findings, and the DMRB Stage 3 assessment of the proposed scheme as reported within this EIAR.

7.1.6 The main aims of consultation during the EIA process were to:

- ensure that statutory consultees, other bodies with a particular interest in the environment, and members of the public, including the local community, were informed of the proposals and provided with an opportunity to comment;
- gather environmental baseline information on existing environmental site conditions (from the public and environmental organisations);
- obtain input to the identification of potential impacts and the development of appropriate mitigation;
- inform the scope of the environmental impact assessment and EIA reporting; and

- seek consultee input to the design.

Screening

- 7.1.7 A Record of Determination (RoD) confirmed the need for an EIA in line with [The Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984](#) (Scottish Government, 1984), as amended by [The Roads \(Scotland\) Act 1984 \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017](#) (Scottish Government, 2017), and following DMRB guidance for Environmental Impact Assessment in [LA102 – Screening projects for Environmental Impact Assessment](#) (Highways England et al., 2019), which provides guidance on the screening process for trunk road projects. A copy of the RoD is provided in Appendix A1.1.

Scoping

- 7.1.8 As explained in Chapter 3 (Overview of Assessment Process), the scope of EIA for the proposed scheme was defined, taking into account DMRB assessment guidance. However, the scope was also informed by the consultation process described in this chapter; through meetings with consultees, review of information received and issues raised, and by a range of technical discussions on detailed methodologies with Transport Scotland and the other design consultants commissioned to progress other projects of the A9 Dualling Programme.
- 7.1.9 A scoping report covering all the A9 Dualling Programme projects undergoing DMRB assessment at that time was completed and submitted to Transport Scotland and statutory consultees in July 2016 (Transport Scotland, 2016) based on DMRB guidance provided in HA204/08–Scoping of Environmental Impact Assessments (Highways England et al, 2008). This was intended to set out the scope of the EIA and the proposed structure of the EIAR.
- 7.1.10 However, after 2016, the proposed scheme moved to an additional optioneering stage, incorporating a Co-Creative Process, with the local community involved in design and evaluation for the route option assessment process (see Section 7.2 (Co-Creative Process)). During this period, the EIA regulatory regime was updated by the implementation of The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as amended by the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as the ‘Roads EIA Regulations’) and publication of [revised DMRB guidance in 2019 and 2020](#) (National Highways et al., 2025).
- 7.1.11 An updated EIA scoping report was therefore prepared for the proposed scheme, to align with the revised Roads EIA Regulations and revised DMRB guidance on scoping, as provided by [LA103 – Scoping projects for environmental assessment](#) (Highways England et al, 2020), and to inform and consult with statutory consultees on the newly proposed scope and methods for undertaking the EIA, which are detailed in Chapter 3 (Overview of Assessment Process).
- 7.1.12 The updated EIA scoping report, prepared specifically for the proposed Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing scheme (Jacobs, 2024), was issued to statutory consultees as part of this EIA in April 2024, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Overview of Assessment Process).
- 7.1.13 The updated scoping report set out the scope of the EIA for the proposed scheme and proposed structure of the EIAR. The specific aims of EIA scoping were to:
- review existing information and reports relating to the proposed scheme;

- identify environmental constraints relevant to both the construction and/or operation of the project and which should therefore be addressed in more detail as part of the EIA;
- identify where additional environmental surveys and data gathering were required;
- summarise the scope of the environmental assessments which would form part of the EIA taking into account likely significant effects of the proposed scheme
- identify key environmental issues to be considered as part of the EIA; and
- agree appropriate detailed methodologies for technical assessments with statutory consultees (see members of Environmental Steering Group (ESG) listed in Table 7.1).

7.1.14 Some comments on the detail of the assessment were received but no amendments to the scope of the EIA were identified and all topics (air quality; cultural heritage; landscape; visual; biodiversity; geology and soils; material assets and waste; noise and vibration; population – land use; population - accessibility; human health; road drainage and the water environment; and climate) were scoped in. Details of the specific scope of assessment for each topic are provided at the start of each respective EIAR chapter (Chapter 8 to Chapter 20).

7.2 Approach to Consultation and Scoping

7.2.1 The approach to consultation and scoping for the proposed scheme is described below.

Identification of Consultees

7.2.2 The process undertaken to identify relevant consultees for the proposed scheme involved the following stages:

- Review of consultees involved on other major and recent highways projects and previous studies undertaken for the proposed scheme, including those involved in the Co-Creative process. The lists of consultees involved in Transport Scotland's [Strategic Transport Projects Review](#) (STPR; Transport Scotland, 2009), the [A9 Dualling: Luncarty to Pass of Birnam project](#) (Transport Scotland, 2014) and the [A9 Dualling: Tay Crossing to Ballinluig project](#) (Transport Scotland, 2018) were also reviewed and used to identify consultees for the proposed scheme.
- Input from the project team environmental specialists. The project team reviewed and updated the initial list of consultees with organisations and local environmental groups of importance to their area of expertise (e.g. Scottish Badgers, Scotways).
- Consideration of scale, size and potential impact of the proposed scheme. In addition to those directly affected by the proposed scheme (e.g. landowners), communities outwith the direct area of influence were considered for their potential to be affected by the proposed scheme.
- Stakeholder mapping exercise in consultation with Transport Scotland.

7.2.3 The statutory and non-statutory consultees identified through this process are discussed further in this chapter, with a summary of key environmental meetings held provided in Appendix A7.1 (Summary of Scoping and Consultation Responses).

- 7.2.4 Consultation with landowners and local communities has been undertaken throughout the assessment process and has informed the proposed scheme design as detailed in Chapter 5 (Iterative Design Development). Consultation with landowners has particularly informed the land use assessment in Chapter 16 (Population – Land Use) and consultation with local communities and access groups has particularly informed Chapter 17 (Population – Accessibility).

Key Stages of EIA Consultation

- 7.2.5 The EIA consultation carried out is described below.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 7.2.6 As explained in Chapter 2 (Need for the Scheme), a [Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)](#) was undertaken to enable an A9 Dualling Programme-level consideration of the potential impacts of the full A9 dualling from Perth to Inverness (Transport Scotland, 2013). The SEA involved extensive consultation, the output from which has been reviewed and taken into account in both the design and EIA of the proposed scheme, as referred to where relevant in this EIAR.

Preliminary Engineering Services (PES) Consultation

- 7.2.7 In December 2012, community consultation was undertaken through a series of exhibitions on the A9 Dualling between Perth and Inverness to inform a Preliminary Engineering Services (PES) study. Further Public Exhibitions were held in June 2013 to provide an update on the A9 PES and SEA Commissions and the progress of the A9 Dualling projects between Perth and Inverness.

DMRB Stage 2 Consultation and the A9 Co-Creative Process

- 7.2.8 DMRB Stage 2 considered a range of potentially feasible route options as described in Chapter 4 (Alternatives Considered).
- 7.2.9 During DMRB Stage 2, consultation letters were issued to a number of statutory and non-statutory environmental consultees. The purpose of this consultation was to notify the consultees of the scheme proposals, provide them with an opportunity to comment and to request information about environmental or other local constraints that may be relevant to the EIA. Feedback from the DMRB Stage 2 consultation letters was collated and, where appropriate, incorporated into the scheme design and used to inform the assessment.
- 7.2.10 As discussed in Chapter 4 (Alternatives Considered), three route options considered by Jacobs (Options A, B and C) were presented to the public at an exhibition in January 2016 and discussed at a public meeting in February 2016. Feedback from these engagement events led to more detailed consultation with the local community to investigate if other suitable alternative options could be identified. As a result, Transport Scotland agreed to the 'Co-Creative Process', involving PAS (formerly Planning Aid Scotland) as facilitators and the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group as representing the community (as previously discussed in Chapter 4 (Alternatives Considered)).

- 7.2.11 The process was open to the general public, with the key contributors forming part of the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group, which was involved in each stage of the Co-Creative process.
- 7.2.12 Following a series of community workshops in October and November 2017, the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group identified the following community objectives:
- Reduce current levels of noise and pollution in the villages of Dunkeld, Birnam and Inver to protect human health, and well-being of residents and visitors and to enable them to peacefully enjoy their properties and amenity spaces.
 - Protect and enhance the scenic beauty and natural heritage of the area and its distinctive character and quality.
 - Provide better, safer access on and off the A9 from both sides of the road ensuring easy, safe movement of vehicular traffic and non-motorised users through the villages, helping to reduce stress and anxiety and support the local economy.
 - Promote long term and sustainable economic growth within Dunkeld and Birnam and the surrounding communities.
 - Examine and identify opportunities to enhance the levels of wheeling, cycling and walking for transport and leisure, including the improvement of existing footpaths and cycle ways, to promote positive mental health and well-being.
 - Ensure that all local bus, intercity bus services and train services are maintained and improved.
 - Preserve and enhance the integrity of the unique and rich historical and cultural features of the Dunkeld, Birnam and Inver communities, thereby supporting well-being and the local economy.
- 7.2.13 The five stage A9 Co-Creative Process (refer to Chapter 4 (Alternatives Considered)) culminated in the identification of the Community's Preferred Route Option (CPRO).
- 7.2.14 The CPRO was then included in the DMRB Stage 2 assessment (Option ST2A, as discussed in Chapter 4 (Alternatives Considered) and as shown on Figure 4.1). The commitment from the Co-Creative Process was that the CPRO would be presented to Scottish Ministers for consideration.
- 7.2.15 Further work was then undertaken on the CPRO considering the environmental, engineering and traffic impacts and included consultation with key stakeholders and residents in close proximity to the A9. The process identified a number of challenges associated with the CPRO, and additional options for each constituent section of the scheme were identified, considered and comparatively assessed, and presented to the public in March 2019. Following stakeholder feedback and further consideration, the additional options were developed into 'Additional Whole Route Options' (Options ST2B – ST2D as discussed in Chapter 4 (Alternatives Considered)), which were then presented at a community drop-in event in May 2019. The additional options were detailed in the 'A9 Dualling Programme: Pass of Birnam to Tay Crossing, Identification of DMRB Stage 2 Whole Route Options Report' (Jacobs, 2019).

Community Workshops

- 7.2.16 At a meeting on 1st October 2019, the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group suggested that they were not clear why additional options to the Community's Preferred Route Option (Option ST2A) had been considered, stating that the majority of the community supported the Community's Preferred Route Option (Option ST2A) that had been identified through the A9 Co-Creative Process. In addition, the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group stated that it was unclear how the three Additional Whole Route Options had been constructed and how the DMRB Stage 2 assessment would identify an Emerging Preferred Route Option. The Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group also suggested that other junction options were available that had not previously been considered.
- 7.2.17 In order to clarify the position, Transport Scotland agreed to hold a series of workshops with the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group. The purpose of these workshops was to allow better understanding of the challenges of the CPRO (Option ST2A) and mitigation possibilities. The workshops were also an opportunity to discuss the reasons and rationale for the Additional Whole Route Options being assessed in the DMRB Stage 2 assessment and any potential refinements or alternative options the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group may wish to discuss. Six workshops were held.
- Community Workshop 1: Murthly/Birnam Junction
 - Community Workshop 2: Dunkeld Junction
 - Community Workshop 3: Dunkeld Junction (alternative grade separated junction) and Dunkeld & Birnam Station
 - Community Workshop 4: Dunkeld Junction (alternative grade separated junction) and Environmental Assessment
 - Community Workshop 5: Environmental Assessment and overview of engineering issues
 - Community Workshop 6: Satisfying Community Objectives
- 7.2.18 In concluding Community Workshop 6, the Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group stated that following the six workshops, they now had a greater understanding of the DMRB Stage 2 assessment process and how the Additional Whole Route Options had been generated. The Birnam to Ballinluig A9 Community Group confirmed that they had no further alternative options for consideration as part of the DMRB Stage 2 assessment process.

Stakeholder Forums

- 7.2.19 A number of Stakeholder Forums were set up to bring together groups of similar interest and to facilitate two-way flow of information. Particular interest, of relevance to the DMRB Stage 3 assessment, were the Environmental Steering Group (ESG) and the Environmental Forum, which allowed environmental issues associated with the A9 Dualling programme to be fully considered and agreed through the design process.

- 7.2.20 A non-motorised user (NMU) Forum was also set up to directly engage and seek views of NMU stakeholders on specific matters relating to the development of the design of the each of the A9 Dualling projects. In addition, an Accessibility Forum was set up to establish a collaborative and inclusive approach in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the A9 Dualling proposals, aiming to create environments that can be used by everyone, regardless of age or disability, in accordance with the [Equality Act 2010](#) (United Kingdom Government, 2010).
- 7.2.21 Along with Transport Scotland and the design consultant representatives, the membership of the ESG, Environmental Forum, NMU Forum and Accessibility Forum comprised those consultees shown in Table 7.1.
- 7.2.22 The ESG has met on a regular basis through DMRB Stages 2 and 3, and it was established to provide a mechanism for cross-party discussion on environmental issues throughout the A9 Dualling Programme. The ESG meetings enabled progress and design updates to be provided, and for the statutory stakeholders to provide valuable input to the process. Additional meetings were held with individual ESG members as/when required to gain input on particular topics or issues.
- 7.2.23 In December 2023, ESG members were provided with information on accessing the Virtual Exhibition held in January 2024 for the Preferred Route Option, along with a summary of its key features, and how ESG members could provide feedback.
- 7.2.24 On 6 February 2024, an ESG meeting was held in Perth, at which Jacobs provided an overview of progress made with the proposed scheme, following the announcement on 20 December 2023 of Option ST2D as the Preferred Route Option. The Preferred Route Option visualisation was used to demonstrate the design features, emphasising future design development to be undertaken during DMRB Stage 3 including the Murthly/Birnam Junction, mainline southbound earthworks adjacent to properties on Perth Road; Dunkeld & Birnam Station; Dunkeld Roundabout; active travel arrangements linking Birnam and Dunkeld to local paths and bus stops; dual carriageway floodplain loss at Inver; Dalguise Junction Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) arrangements; Tay Crossing southbound bridge design (piers and active travel provision); and the northern tie-in with the A9 Dualling: Tay Crossing to Ballinluig scheme. The management of materials within and across the A9 Dualling projects was also discussed.
- 7.2.25 At a further ESG Meeting in May 2024, the following issues were identified as requiring further discussion through DMRB Stage 3:
- to confirm a site-specific methodology and legal context for securing land to deliver Positive Effects for Biodiversity as a new requirement of NPF4; and
 - to consult on the mitigation proposals for Dunkeld and Birnam Station.

Table 7.1: Stakeholder ESG/Forum Membership

Environmental Steering Group (ESG)	
Cairngorms National Park Authority	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	NatureScot (then Scottish National Heritage)
Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) (and Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT) as their Heritage Advisers)	The Highland Council
Environmental Forum	
All attendees from the ESG	RSPB
Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group	Scottish Badgers
British Deer Society	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Buglife	Spey District Fisheries Board
Findhorn, Nairn, and Lossie Fisheries Board	Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board
Forestry and Land Scotland (then Forestry Commission Scotland)	The Woodland Trust
NMU Forum	
A9 Action Group Birnam	Paths for All
Association of British Riding Schools	Perth and Kinross Council
British Horse Society	Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust
ByCycle UK	Ramblers Scotland
Cairngorms Local Outdoor Access Forum	Scottish Natural Heritage
Cairngorms National Park Authority	Scottish Outdoor Access Network
Cycle UK	Scotways
Cycling Scotland	Sustrans Cairngorms Group
Highland Cycle Campaign	Sustrans Perth and Inverness Volunteer Group
HITRANS	TACTRAN
Living Streets	The Highland Council
National Access Forum	The Mountaineering Council of Scotland
Accessibility Forum	
People Friendly Design	Scottish Disability Equality Forum
Mobility and Access Community for Scotland	

- 7.2.26 At the ESG Meeting in September 2024, two technical topics were covered:
- Dunkeld & Birnam Station
 - Positive Effects for Biodiversity
- 7.2.27 Actions arising from this meeting were to convene a sub-group of the ESG to further discuss the design development of Dunkeld & Birnam Station and for the assessment approach for Positive Effects for Biodiversity to be shared with the ESG for comment.
- 7.2.28 The ESG sub-group met on-site at Dunkeld & Birnam Station and at Birnam Arts Centre on 20 November 2024 to further discuss design development of Dunkeld & Birnam Station. Meeting invites were extended to Network Rail and Transport Scotland (Rail) to ensure the attendees were aware of wider proposed developments being considered at the Station outwith the A9 Dualling project.
- 7.2.29 The project approach for assessing Positive Effects for Biodiversity was discussed with the ESG in March 2025 and it was agreed that the approach would be shared as part of the ESG review of the Draft EIAR in March/April 2025.
- 7.2.30 The March 2025 meeting of the ESG included discussion on the following topics:
- Murthly Castle Garden and Designed Landscape.
 - Murthly Estate Bridge and Murthly Estate Access.
 - Birnam Junction design.
 - Dunkeld & Birnam Station design development.
 - Natural Capital Assessment
- 7.2.31 The Environmental Forum met at various stages throughout DMRB Stage 2, providing updates on projects and key findings of the progressing assessments, and enabling all attendees to provide input and share information.
- 7.2.32 The NMU Forum met in May 2015 and May 2016, where NMU stakeholders were updated on the A9 Dualling Programme and were provided with an overview of the NMU Access Strategy. NMU workshops were also held in April 2016 and June 2017, and views on specific matters relating to the development of the scheme design were sought. A further NMU Forum meeting was held on 23 April 2024. Subsequently a meeting was held with Peth Access Forum in February 2025 at which WCH provision was discussed including between Birnam Junction and Birnam Glen; over the River Braan linking Birnam, Dunkeld and Inver; and over the River Tay, including the new WCH provision on the River Tay Bridge.
- 7.2.33 A summary of the relevant forum and consultation meetings is included in Appendix A7.1 (Summary of Scoping and Consultation Responses).
- 7.2.34 In addition, the following environmental organisations were contacted in May 2024 and requested to provide any data they may have applicable to the DMRB Stage 3 assessment within a 500m buffer study area around the scheme extents. They were also asked to identify any key issues or concerns that should be considered in the assessment.

- Bat Conservation Trust Rivers
- Fisheries Trusts of Scotland
- Botanical Society of the British Isles (Mid Perthshire)
- Save Scotland's Red Squirrels
- Botanical Society of the British Isles (East Perthshire)
- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (UK)
- Scottish Mink Initiative
- Dunkeld and Birnam Angling Association
- Scottish Wildcat Association
- Marine Scotland
- National Trust for Scotland
- Tayside Biodiversity Partnership and Geodiversity
- National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway
- Tayside Amphibian and Reptile Group
- Perth and District Anglers Association
- Tayside Bat Group
- Perth Bat Group
- Tay Riparian Owners
- Pike Anglers Association for Scotland
- The Grayling Society
- Raptor Study Group

DMRB Stage 3 Public Exhibitions and further Public Engagement

- 7.2.35 Following completion of the DMRB Stage 2 assessment and the announcement of the Preferred Route on 20 December 2023, stakeholders were provided with emails and phone calls on the 20 December 2023 alerting them to the announcement, and signposting to the Preferred Route Virtual Exhibition and Story Map which was live online from 20 December 2023 to 17 March 2024.
- 7.2.36 An in-person Public Exhibition was also held on 29 and 30 January 2024 at Birnam Arts & Conference Centre.
- 7.2.37 The Preferred Route Virtual Exhibition and Story Map and the in-person Public Exhibition presented the Preferred Route; providing an update on the scheme, including the outcome of the Co-Creative process, details on the preferred route and the DMRB assessment process. For both virtual and in-person events, there was opportunity to provide feedback by the virtual exhibition end date of 17 March 2024.

- 7.2.38 Public exhibitions were also held on 21 and 22 August 2024 to allow members of the public to see and comment on the development of the proposed scheme design since the Preferred Route was announced. The exhibitions were hosted by Transport Scotland with support from members of the project team, including the environmental team. This ran in parallel with an online exhibition presenting the same exhibition material. Visitors to the in-person and on-line exhibitions had the opportunity to fill in a comments sheet, and this feedback was provided to the project team. A deadline of 6 October 2024 was set for this feedback and responses invited via email or post.
- 7.2.39 Further exhibitions will also be held at the conclusion of the DMRB Stage 3 assessment, shortly after the publication of draft Orders and the EIAR.
- 7.2.40 Discussions with potentially affected business and commercial property owners were also undertaken during the DMRB Stage 3 design process and informed the development of the design and mitigation of the proposed scheme. Meetings were held with business and commercial property owners to allow consideration of aspects such as road alignments and land-take and revised access arrangements to land and properties. The outcomes of these meetings were used in the ongoing design and mitigation development where necessary.
- 7.2.41 Further details of the key input provided by consultees in relation to environmental issues is provided in Appendix A7.1 (Summary of Scoping and Consultation Responses).

7.3 References

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